

# Cultural Daily

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## ICE Splits Families Apart

Reed Maruyama · Wednesday, December 5th, 2018

Ever since President Donald Trump introduced a “zero-tolerance” policy calling for the prosecution of all individuals who illegally enter the United States, children have been separated from their families daily while trying to enter or stay in the country. Stories of deportations, estrangement of families, and immigrant detention centers have crossed the screens of the public daily; but after a while, these families become just another name, another hashtag to scroll past.

People enjoy life in their own bubble of safety; all of the unpleasantness happens far away where it cannot hurt them.

I too enjoyed the comfort of my own bubble until a text in the early morning brought America’s issues of immigration too close to home.

“Hey Reed,” the text read. “I wanted to let you know that I am safe but I won’t be coming home for a long time.” The boy who texted me was my friend of a couple years. He was active in his community and spent his time participating in track and field and playing bass in his high school orchestra.

My friend had been having issues with his parents’ citizenship, causing Immigration and Customs Enforcement to show up at his house. His parents knew their rights and refused to let ICE in without a warrant, but they waited for him at his bus stop and detained him, having his parents come to the rescue. His Deferred Action of Childhood Arrivals was about to expire; he could stay but he had nowhere to go.



Man is detained by ICE.

When his parents arrived to take my friend out of the holding center they had brought him to, ICE threatened to separate them. He willingly left the United States to be with his family and now has no way of living in his childhood home until he gets his citizenship back.

“I was lucky,” my friend said. “We had enough money for a plane ticket back home and we have family that gave us a place to stay. It could have been way worse. I’m just glad that my family stayed together, I don’t know what I would have done without them in that situation, I was so scared.”

Many children are not as lucky. My friend is a junior in high school student, capable of speaking for his rights and needs if necessary. Children are taken from their parents at all ages. 100 out of every 700 children taken are under the age of four. These kids are placed in [detention centers](#), unable to process what is happening and unknowing of when they are going to see their parents again.

This kind of trauma has long term effects on children. Houston Public Media released a [clip](#) of a child who could not recognize his mother after three months of separation; CNN released another video of a 13 year old's account of life in a detention center. "I was in a shelter for two months," the boy said in an [interview](#) with CNN. "I thought I was going to be in that place for my entire life. I felt oppressed, imprisoned, I became numb." These children now have to live with separation anxiety and a fear for their family's safety.

The fact that children have to spend some of the most critical years of their life away from their parents and sometimes imprisoned is baffling. No matter their immigration status, children and teenagers should never have to go through what my friend did.

*(Article originally appeared in the [Clark Chronicle](#))*

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